

VZCZCXRO6545
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV
DE RUEHRB #0443 1371756
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 161756Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8580
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 3535
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 4093
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0815
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0193

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000443

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: SENIOR GOM OFFICIAL: AMERICA SHOULD CHANGE ITS
IMAGE

Classified By: (C) Classified by Political Counselor Craig Karp for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: During a meeting with National War College students and faculty, Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General of Bilateral Relations Youssef Amrani identified the poor perception of the United States in the region as the U.S. government's greatest foreign policy challenge. Further, Amrani stated the U.S. needs to make headway in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and toward this end engage with Hamas. Lastly, Amrani identified the U.S. conflict in Iraq as an issue causing significant foreign policy challenges. End summary.

U.S. Needs a Positive Image

¶2. (C) On May 13, Poloffs attended a meeting hosted by Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Director General of Bilateral Relations Youssef Amrani who briefed National Defense University students on Moroccan foreign policy issues and engagement with the U.S. Amrani is one of our post's principal interlocutors for bilateral issues within the MFA and describes himself as a friend of the U.S. Amrani identified the negative image of the U.S. within the Arab world as the greatest challenge the U.S. faces in the region. He believes that the U.S.'s image problems are the result of a historical failure to communicate effectively and although the U.S. has been communicating better in recent years, major policy issues remain. Amrani recommends the U.S. undertake efforts to publicize U.S. foreign policy successes and further related that the continued promotion of democracy can help America's image. Likewise, Amrani lauded U.S. efforts put forth to bring together Middle East governments and civil societies and complimented U.S. efforts pushing reform agendas.

U.S. Must See Annapolis Through

¶4. (C) Amrani identified the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a major foreign policy challenge for the U.S. and a stumbling block to lasting peace in the entire Middle East. At several points during Amrani's discussion, he reiterated the need for the U.S. to seize the initiative gained during the Annapolis negotiations to seek a final resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Amrani stated Annapolis was a breakthrough because it included the Saudis, but it needs to be made concrete. Calling the amelioration of the humanitarian crisis in Palestine a prerequisite to peace, he emphasized, &People who are hungry do not make peace.8 Also according to Amrani, the U.S. must support Palestinian President Mahmaud Abbas and his efforts to control the Palestinian territory and engage with Hamas.

¶5. (C) Amrani underscored his country's historic arms-length

posture toward Hamas by reiterating the fact the Government of Morocco has never officially received Hamas leadership. Amrani, however, saw a need for the U.S. to engage with Hamas and bring them into the peace process in some undefined manner. Amrani recommended the U.S. encourage Israel to discontinue, & collective punishment⁸ of the Palestinian people when attacked. By engaging with Hamas while ensuring Israeli security, Amrani believes confidence building will take place, leading to productive negotiations.

What to do About Iraq

16. (C) Amrani stated that the momentum recently gained in Iraq by U.S. security efforts needs to be maintained and that the political process needs time to continue to develop. Though Amrani didn't elaborate on U.S. Iraq policy; he inferred that a premature withdrawal from Iraq would be imprudent.

Visit Embassy Rabat's Classified Website;
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

Riley